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RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3183  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KATHMANDU 000427

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [UN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: UNMIN COMPLETES ARMS AND COMBATANT  
REGISTRATION

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador February 22, UNMIN chief Ian Martin said that the UN would be releasing final numbers of arms (roughly 3,400) and combatants (roughly 30,000) registered by UNMIN on February 23. The Ambassador emphasized to Martin that he should also release the types of weapons collected (whether "home-made" or "advanced") as a raw number would not reflect the success of the arms management process. Martin said he would make this difference clear in his statement. In a subsequent briefing with the diplomatic corps on February 23, Martin and his military advisor General Jan Erik Wilhemsen said UNMIN had registered 3,428 weapons and 30,852 People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants and provided a breakdown of weapon type. In the briefing, Martin said the number and types of weapons registered roughly matched the list of weapons Maoists had captured during the insurgency that was provided by GON security officials. Martin also said the UN-GON-Maoist Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC) had agreed to take the lead in comparing the two lists and analyzing any discrepancies. Martin emphasized to the Ambassador that the GON would have to make the final judgment on whether arms management was complete; UNMIN's mandate was only to provide objective information. Referencing the recent Maoist walk-out from cantonment sites in the southern Terai, Martin complained that deplorable conditions in the camps had been ignored by the GON and Maoists, adding that he was continuing to press for a joint UN-GON-Maoist taskforce on camp management.

Ambassador Presses Martin to Include Weapon Types

2. (C) UNMIN chief Ian Martin told the Ambassador February 22 that the UN would be briefing the Prime Minister, Diplomatic Corps and then conducting a public press event on February 23 to share final numbers on arms collected (roughly 3400).; Martin said that he planned to compare these numbers to the list of weapons captured from GON security forces (roughly 3500).; The Ambassador emphasized to Martin that such a comparison of raw numbers might give the impression that most

of the captured weapons had been turned in, and not reflect the success of the arms collection process.; It would be important for the UN to break these numbers down into weapon types. Martin said he would make this difference clear in his statement.; The Ambassador stressed that the U.S. would support the GON in its response to the UN arms collection exercise, whether it decided to accept it as complete or challenge the numbers and ask for additional modern weapons from the Maoists.;

#### Collection of Weapons for Personal Security Not Complete

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13. (C) Martin told the Ambassador that the final count of weapons had been held up by a lack of clarity on the number and types of arms being used for personal security of Maoist leadership. The Maoists and the GON had reached agreement on retaining only a limited number of weapons for VIP security and locking the rest in arms containers. Some of the these Maoist weapons would be counted and accounted for in Kathmandu, while others would be placed in containers in various cantonment sites. Martin was unclear how long it would take to register the arms and when the GON would decide on acceptable arrangements for Maoist personal security. The debate had centered around two main issues; 1) whether Maoists would use Nepal Police or Armed Police Force (APF) personnel or bring their own security detail under a government structure/payroll; and 2) the number of weapons that could be used for personal security, including how far down the chain-of-command the GON would allow Maoists to have armed security. The Ambassador and Martin agreed that these weapons would likely be the "best of the bunch" and would raise the count of advanced weapons collected.

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#### UN Offers to Assist Camps

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14. (C) The Ambassador asked Martin how UNMIN planned to respond to the massive flight in recent days of combatants from PLA cantonment sites in the southern Terai region. Martin emphasized that the problem of camp management and camp conditions was the responsibility of both the GON and the Maoists. The UN had repeatedly offered assistance to the camps, but the non-transparent nature of the process had made it difficult to offer practical solutions or assign responsibility -- whether to the Maoists for not using GON-transferred funds properly or to the GON for not addressing necessary camp management needs. Decisions at the highest-level, Martin lamented, did not translate into action at the local level. Martin said the UN had offered to assist the formation of a camp improvement taskforce that would include the UN, GON, and the Maoists participants. The UN had also offered to organize a joint visit of the camps but had heard very little from either the GON or the Maoists in response to these offers. The Ambassador questioned the timing of the recent Maoist cantonment walk-out, arguing it was a political maneuver to put pressure on the GON rather than a crisis due to lack of food, water and shelter. This was particularly the case since the walk-outs took place following a UN offer of assistance, in warmer weather, and without any accounting of funds already transferred directly from the GON to the Maoists to feed and shelter PLA combatants.

#### The Larger Question of Demobilization and Reintegration

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15. (C) Martin told the Ambassador the recent camp walk-outs pointed to the need to begin discussion on long-term demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. These efforts, Martin said, would need to be tailored to the type of former fighter -- "real" PLA combatants who would be eligible to join future security forces needed to be separated from children and others who would need other

options. Martin said that in the second phase of arms management (set to begin March 15), UNDP teams would be conducting extensive vetting of combatants to ascertain more detailed information on how long they had been in the PLA (those recruited after May 26, 2006 are not eligible for cantonment), age, rank, and fighting history. The Ambassador reiterated U.S. policy to Martin that those who did not qualify for cantonment should be rapidly let go.

#### Martin Releases Number of Weapons and Combatants Registered

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16. (C) UNMIN Chief Martin and military advisor General Jan Erik Wilhemsen told the diplomatic corps on February 23 that UNMIN had completed registration at all the main cantonment sites, registering 3,428 weapons and 30,852 People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatants. (Note: A scanned copy of UNMIN's report has been sent to the Nepal desk. End note.) Martin clarified that a final tally would have to wait until the GON and Maoists resolved the issue of arms being used for the personal security of Maoist leaders; Martin hoped this would be completed over the next few days but noted discussion to date had gone nowhere. Martin had also released detailed figures to the JMCC and the Prime Minister. Martin said the numbers and types of weapons registered roughly matched the list GON security officials had provided of weapons captured by the Maoists during the insurgency. The JMCC had agreed to compare the two lists and discuss any discrepancies. Martin said it would be up to the GON to decide whether arms management was complete and whether to allow the Maoists to enter an interim government. The role of the UN was to provide neutral information.

#### Martin Pledges to Continue Efforts to Improve Camp Conditions

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17. (C) During the diplomatic corps briefing, General Wilhemsen reported that he had heard "wildly varied" reporting on the number of combatants that had deserted from

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the Chitwan camp (Cantonment 3) in recent days ranging from 300 (reported by local witnesses), to 700 (reported by the deputy camp commander), to 3,000 (reported by the camp commander). Wilhemsen said, however, that the deserters had returned to the camps by the evening of February 22. (N.B.: We have no further confirmation of Wilhemsen's statement and have heard several reports to the contrary.) Martin said he would continue to push for a joint UN-GON-Maoist taskforce on camp management and had heard that the Home Minister planned to visit the some of the camps on February 25. Martin also said he felt the walk-outs were intended to put political pressure on the GON, as opposed to a legitimate grievance regarding conditions.

#### UNMIN Say Surplus Combatants Must Go

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18. (C) Wilhemsen said that of the roughly 30,000 combatants registered, only about one-third were "core fighters," the remaining were combat support personnel, administrative staff, and children. He also estimated roughly 20 percent of the PLA registered were female. Martin encouraged the diplomatic community to push for the quick release of those combatants who do not qualify for cantonment.

#### IEDs, Socket Bombs Still Outstanding

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19. (C) Martin reiterated that IEDs and socket bombs, principal weapons used by the Maoists during the insurgency, were not accounted for in the numbers of arms collected. However, UN mine and IED experts were assisting in accounting for the weapons at the PLA camps and had already begun establishing guarded sites for their safe storage outside the camps. These experts were also developing plans for their

eventual destruction. General Wilhemsen estimated that the PLA probably had roughly 15,000 to 20,000 IEDs and socket bombs.

#### Testing UN Surveillance Equipment

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¶10. (C) Martin told the Ambassador his team was currently testing the UN surveillance equipment that would be used to secure the arms containers at PLA camp #3 in Chitwan. While the equipment was not fully in place, UNMIN would still be able to ascertain in the interim whether there had been attempts to access the weapons and could report this publicly. Martin also said the GON had not lived up to its commitments on security in the camps, mentioning a lack of fencing in place around weapons container sites.

#### Forward Movement on Election Will Require Inclusive Process

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¶11. (C) On the planned June 2007 Constituent Assembly elections, Martin said the current sticking point was on electoral arrangements. Both UN electoral assistance and the Election Commission were sufficiently mobilized to move the process forward. When asked whether the election could take place by June, Martin deferred to the judgment of Chief Election Commissioner Bhoj Raj Pokhrel who said that, unless the necessary legislation was in place by the end of February, June elections would be impossible. Martin highlighted that the parties needed to create an inclusive process that could be accepted by the range of marginalized groups opposed to the current electoral arrangement.

#### Comment

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¶12. (C) Post is reassured that initial indications point to a reasonably comprehensive arms collection process and that the GON will have a chance to discuss any discrepancies directly with the Maoists, in the presence of the UN. We will continue to encourage the GON to hang tough on not letting the Maoists into an interim government until it is sufficiently confident that the vast bulk of Maoist weapons, including advanced weapons, are stored. We remain concerned

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about the conditions in the cantonment sites -- the arms monitoring exercise will be undermined if combatants desert the camps and the Maoists use the camps as a political ploy to challenge the GON. We will encourage the UN's attempts to form a joint taskforce on camp management so the Maoists are no longer able to use camp conditions as a political tool. We will also encourage donors to support the camps and reintegration efforts. We will continue to press for the ineligible Maoist combatants to be weeded out of the cantonments.

MORIARTY